

Jesus Appears in Galilee

(John 21:1-17)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever made a mistake? We all mess things up from time to time; sometimes we mess up in small ways, like forgetting to put the eggs in a cake mix. Or sometimes we mess up in big ways, like hurting our friend's feelings.

Have you ever really sinned against someone? I have! [Teacher, discuss with class. Give an example from your own life. Be sure to include how God reconciled your sin through forgiveness and gave you the confidence to continue serving.]

When you blow it, what do you do? Do you just try to ignore it and pretend it didn't happen? Or do you own up to your sin?

Sometimes we can be so embarrassed with ourselves it's hard to hold up our heads. But, let me tell you, you never know how God can use what happened for our good and His glory! God can take our mistakes and turn them into something new and meaningful. We sin and mess things up, but Christ was sent to restore us!

Today we're going to learn there is no sin too awful to bring to Him. No matter what we do, if we have a truly repentant heart, God is always ready to forgive us. He has a plan and a purpose for your life because you are His precious child.

Opening Prayer

Father, we make so many mistakes, but we know You offer a new beginning every time we seek forgiveness. Thank You for loving us and helping us become more like You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Lesson

We've been learning about what Jesus did for the 40 days He was here on earth between the time He rose from the dead and the time He went up to heaven.

The first one to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene. She had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion while it was still dark. She looked in the tomb and found that it was empty. So, she ran back to tell the disciples, but they didn't believe her.

The next ones to see Jesus were the two men walking to Emmaus. They walked and talked with Jesus for 7 miles. They didn't know it was Him until they had dinner that night and He took the bread, broke it, blessed it, and gave it to them. At that moment, their spiritual eyes were opened and they recognized Him. The moment they recognized Him, He disappeared! So, these two men ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what happened.

While these two men were telling the disciples about meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, suddenly He appeared. But as we learned last week, Thomas wasn't there. He missed the whole thing.

At first Thomas refused to believe the other disciples when they told him that they'd seen Jesus alive. But then, 8 days later, Jesus reappeared and this time Thomas was there.

Today we're going to learn about another time Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. This was about a week later while some of the disciples were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

John 21:3

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

They fished all night and didn't catch a single fish. When morning came, the men were tired and hungry. So, they started to row in to shore and they saw a Man standing on the beach.

John 21:4

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

There was Jesus standing on the shore, but the disciples didn't recognize Him.

John 21:5-6

Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." (6) He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

Even though they had fished all night and hadn't caught a single fish, they obeyed this Stranger on the beach. And when they did, their nets became so full of fish they could barely haul the net in!

There's a lesson here for us! If we are obedient, things will go well for us. If you obey Jesus, He will bless your life.

John looked at this enormous catch of fish and he thought, "*There's only one Man that could do something this wonderful!*"

John 21:7

That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

When John yelled, "*It is Jesus*", Peter got so excited that he jumped out of the boat and swam as fast as he could to shore. He didn't want to wait for the others to row the boat in. He wanted to be with Jesus!

Do you ever get really excited about spending time with Jesus?

John 21:8-9

The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.

Jesus built a campfire and called His disciples to come and eat.

Question: Where did Jesus get the fish?

John 21:12

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

After breakfast Jesus took Peter aside. Now before we go on with the story, let me remind you of a terrible thing that Peter did before the Lord was crucified. He really messed up.

The Roman soldiers had come and arrested Jesus and they took Him and beat Him and whipped Him until His back was bloody. They put a purple robe on Him and pushed a crown of thorns on His head and they spit on Him and made fun of Him because He had said, He was the King of the Jews.

While they were doing all this to Jesus, Peter was in the crowd watching. What do you think Peter was thinking and feeling as he watched Jesus being so cruelly treated? [Let the class discuss.]

Three times while Peter was watching what the Romans were doing to Jesus, some people pointed at Peter and accused him of being one of Jesus' followers. Peter was so scared that the Romans would come after him and beat him up like they were doing to Jesus that all three times he lied and said that He didn't even know Jesus.

Have you ever lied? How did you feel? Did you feel guilty? Peter felt so guilty for denying that he even knew Jesus that he wept bitterly.

Now back to our story. The disciples had just eaten breakfast with the Lord on the beach and Jesus took Peter aside...

John 21:15

*When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**"*

When Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, He used the Greek word *agape*, which is God's kind of perfect love. But when Peter answered, he used the word *fileo* [Fi-Leo], which is a word for "brotherly love". In other words, Jesus asked, "Do you love me" and Peter responded, "I like you."

Then Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs".

Then Jesus asked Peter the same question a second time.

John 21:16

*He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**"*

Again, Jesus asked, "Do you love me" and Peter responded, "You know that I like you."

This time Jesus told Peter to "Tend my sheep."

Then Jesus asked Peter a third time.

John 21:17

*He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**"*

This time Jesus used *fileo*. He asked Peter, "Do you even like Me?" And this saddened Peter. He said to Jesus "You know everything. You know that that I like you."

Jesus didn't doubt Peter's love. Jesus knew that Peter loved Him as a brother. But Jesus was calling Peter to a higher and deeper level of love. Jesus didn't want Peter to simply like Him; Jesus wanted Peter to love Him with all his heart so that he could be a strong and confident witness.

Why do you think that Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him? [Let the class discuss.]

Just as Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times, the risen Jesus asked Peter to affirm his love three times.

Notice that Jesus gave Peter a very special job to do.

Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs" (vs 15), "Tend my sheep" (vs 16) and "Feed my sheep" (vs 17).

Was Jesus telling Peter He wanted him to become a shepherd?

No, when Jesus told Peter, to "feed" and "tend" His sheep, Jesus wasn't talking about the kind of sheep that have wool and go *bah, bah, bah*.

How many of you have pets at home? Is it important to feed and care for your pet? Well, the Bible tells us that God is our Good Shepherd. He thinks of His followers as His precious little lambs that need to be fed and cared for.

So, when Jesus was talking about His "sheep", He was thinking about the people who followed Him and loved Him. Jesus knew that He was going to go back to His heavenly Father soon and He wanted to make sure Peter would teach and care for the people who would be left on earth without Him. Jesus wanted to know that they were going to be fed and looked after by leaders like Peter.

Jesus knew that Peter was truly sorry that He had lied about even knowing Him. So, even though Peter had messed up and lied about knowing Him, Jesus wanted Peter to know that he was forgiven and that He still wanted him take care of His people, His precious lambs.

How happy Peter was to be able to tell others about Jesus. Ten days later, Peter preached a sermon and three thousand people came to believe in Jesus that day!

Jesus had forgiven Peter and restored him to right standing.

Even when we mess up and sin, if we confess our love for Jesus, He is faithful to forgive us and to give us a fresh start in life. God is merciful and always ready to forgive.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. Thank You that you are so willing to forgive us and to restore us to right standing with You. Give us opportunities to share Your love with others and to take care of their needs. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Fishing Game

Write questions on the back of fish shapes. Put a paperclip on each "fish" and put them all into a bucket. Make a "fishing pole" using a dowel and string with a magnet on the end. Let children "fish" for the questions. On a felt board, put point values on the back of felt fish shapes. On a correctly answered question, the child chooses a felt fish to win points for his or her team.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Who was the first one to see the risen Jesus? (Mary Magdalene.)

2. Who were the second ones to see the risen Jesus? (The two men walking to Emmaus.)
3. Why didn't these followers of Jesus recognize Him after His resurrection? (Teacher, let the children discuss this. Perhaps it was because Jesus was the last person they expected to see, it didn't register that it was Him.)
4. After they fished all night and caught nothing, what did Jesus tell the disciple to do? (Cast their nets on the other side of the boat.)
5. What would have happened if the disciples had refused to throw their nets on the other side of the boat? (They would have missed out on having breakfast with Jesus on the beach!)
6. How was it that John figured out it was Jesus? (He knew there was only One person that could perform such a miracle.)
7. What did Peter do when John yelled, "*It's the Lord*"? (He jumped into the water and swam ashore. He wanted to be with Jesus.)
8. What did Jesus want to teach the disciples by giving them the huge, miraculous catch of fish? (That He alone can do the impossible. He will supply all their needs. If you obey Him, He will bless your life.)
9. What was Jesus doing while the disciples were coming ashore? (He built a fire and was fixing breakfast.)
10. Why did Peter deny the Lord? (Peter was so scared that the Romans would come after him and beat him up like they were doing to Jesus, that he lied and said that He didn't even know Jesus.)
11. Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him? (Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times, the risen Jesus asked Peter

to affirm his love three times. Jesus wanted Peter to know he was totally forgiven and restored to right standing with God.)

12. What was Jesus talking about when He told Peter to “*Feed my lambs*” and “*Tend my sheep*”? (Jesus wanted Peter to teach and care for His followers.)

